

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 4-7, 13 and 14 are amended. Support for the amendments to these claims may be found in original claims 1-15, as well as in Figs. 14, 18, 23 and 25, for example. No new matter is added. Claim 16 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Vo at the interview held on July 30, 2008, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below, which constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, and under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Independent claims 1 and 13 are amended to obviate the rejections. As agreed during the July 30 personal interview, the amendments to claims 1 and 13, based on the subject matter recited in claim 16, overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112 are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0089708 to Cheng in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,185,014 to Ishii. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action concedes, on page 4, that Cheng does disclose that one of the two screen vectors of the first halftone screen is parallel to one of the screen vectors of the second halftone screen, and the other screen vector of the first halftone screen is not parallel with the other screen vector of the second halftone screen. The Office Action asserts that Ishii

supplies the subject matter missing from Cheng. However, Ishii does not disclose, and would not have suggested, that two first screen vectors, one in each halftone screen, each screen vector being in a spatial frequency domain defined by a basis vector of a halftone dot pattern of the respective halftone screen, are parallel to each other, as recited in claims 1 and 13.

Ishii discloses causing differences among initial phases so that the centers of dots of respective colors are separated from each other uniformly (col. 3, lines 55-62). However, the Office Action merely asserts, on page 5, that the subject matter recited in claim 1 "is similar to Ishii' (6,185,014) have taught [sic]," without providing further guidance as to how Ishii is similar, and thus concludes that Ishii, in combination with Cheng, would have rendered obvious claim 1. However, "rejections on obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." MPEP §2141(II) (*quoting KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc (KSR)*., 550 U.S. at ___, 82 USPQ2d at 1396). The Office Action's mere assertion that Ishii is "similar" to the subject matter recited in claim 1, and therefore, supplies the subject matter missing from Cheng, is the sort of conclusory statement the Supreme Court objected to in *KSR*.

Further, as discussed during the personal interview, there is no articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support a legal conclusion of obviousness over Ishii because that reference does not disclose that screen vectors are parallel to each other. Ishii only refers to something being parallel in col. 2, lines 8-10, a passage not cited by the Office Action. This passage discloses that a strong moiré pattern occurs in parallel with a main scanning direction. A strong moiré pattern is not a screen vector in a spatial frequency domain defined by a basis vector of a halftone dot pattern. Thus, nothing in this passage, or in all of Ishii, discloses, or would have suggested, that two first screen vectors, one in each halftone screen, each screen vector being in a spatial frequency domain defined by a basis

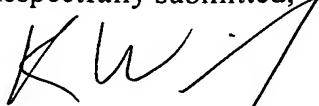
vector of a halftone dot pattern of the respective halftone screen, are parallel to each other, as recited in claims 1 and 13. Rather, the Office Action's conclusion of obviousness must be based on knowledge gleaned only from applicant's disclosure, and therefore constitutes impermissible hindsight reasoning (MPEP §2145(X.A)).

In view of the above, Ishii is not applied in any way which would overcome the shortfall in the application of Cheng to the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 13. Claims 2-12, 14 and 15 variously depend from claims 1 and 13. Thus, the combination of the applied references would not have rendered obvious the subject matter recited in claims 2-12, 14 and 15 because of the dependency of these claims on an allowable base claim, and also because of the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-15 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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